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Nautical "Seven Days in May" Feared as Navy Consolidates Hold on US Power

by Benjamin F. Schemmer

Senior US Air Force and some Army officials are worried that "Seven Days in May" has arrived, albeit with a different twist. In that 1960s novel, a US Air Force general running the Joint Chiefs of Staff almost pulled off a coup d'état but was foiled by a Marine colonel. Today, some Washington observers suggest, the Navy has already seized power—but no one has noticed yet. In less than eight months:

- V. Adm. John **Poindexter** has become the President's National Security Advisor.
- Donald **Regan**, a former Marine, has become White House Chief of Staff.



Poindexter



Regan

- Admiral William J. **Crowe** is Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, replacing an Army General, John W. Vessey, Jr.
- V. Adm. Donald S. **Jones** has become the Senior Military Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, replacing an Army major general, Colin S. Powell, who, while being promoted to three star rank, has been "shipped off to Germany," as some demented minds in Washington view power shifts. (Powell moves to command an Army corps; Jones moves to another desk.)



Crowe



Jones

- R. Adm. William A. **Cockell** has retired but will become Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering.
- R. Adm. Richard H. **Truly** is head of NASA's space shuttle program.
- Cliff **Duncan**, a former Navy test pilot, has been made Director of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency.

More worrisome to non-Navy moguls is that the Navy *already* had an impressive



Cockell



Truly

lock on US power with:

- John Francis **Lehman**, Jr., as Secretary of the Navy;



Duncan



Lehman

- William J. **Casey**, who was commissioned into the Naval Reserve in 1943, as Director of Central Intelligence;



McGovern

tary of the Air Force.);

- Christopher **Lehman**, John Lehman's brother, as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Legislative and Legal Affairs, a job he recently left for the private sector;

- Recently retired Admiral Sylvester R. **Foley**, Jr., now head of all Energy Department work on nuclear programs.

In addition, the Navy Department already controlled 60% of the votes of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, with Crowe as Chairman, Admiral James D. **Watkins** as Chief of Naval Operations, and General Paul X. **Kelley** as Marine Corps Commandant. Last year, the Marine Corps also won its third four-star general when George B. **Crist** became the first Marine in American history to command a unified or specified



Foley



Watkins

command as CinC US Central Command. Washington worrywarts also note that a Navy officer, V. Adm. Powell F. **Carter**, is



Kelley



Crist

Director of the Joint Staff, while two Naval Academy graduates moved last year toward the epicenter of aerospace power:

- Air Force General Lawrence A. **Skantze** (USNA 1952) now commands Air Force Systems Command;



Carter



Skantze

- USAF General Robert T. **Herres** (USNA 1954) is Commander-in-Chief of US Space Command.



Herres

Paranoia over the Navy's gradual seizure of the national security apparatus doesn't concern "National Command Authorities," the euphemism that identifies the President and Secretary of Defense. Sources assure the

Journal that, "to the best of our knowledge," the Commander-in-Chief and the Secretary of Defense "are still in charge." Ronald **Reagan** is a former Army Air Corps officer, and Defense Secretary Caspar **Weinberger** is a former Army officer. A senior Navy official remarked to the *Journal*, "They're just surrounded by friends." ■ ☆ ■

News Commentary